

Nat Conklin House  
Babylon, L.I., New York  
Suffolk Co.

HABS No. NY-542

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New York  
(Brooklyn--Long Island)

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Lester B. Pope, District Officer  
Pratt Institute  
Brooklyn, New York

" NAT CONKLIN HOUSE "

Babylon, Suffolk County, New York

Owner

Davis S. Sammis Estate; tenant occupies house.

Date of Erection

1803.

Architect and Builder

Nathaniel Conklin.

Present Condition

Good. Front section moved here in 1873 from original situation, facing south at N. E. corner Deer Park Avenue and Montauk Highway. In danger of encroachments by real estate developments.

Number of Stories

Two, and large attic.

Materials of Construction

Brick foundation and chimneys (late), hewn oak frame, pine floors, plastered walls, pine trim. Outside covering of split and dressed white cedar shingles and matched pine boarding. Some early wrought iron door hardware left; most hardware late, cast-iron.

Other Existing Records

Brown sandstone 'corner-stone' now on the Babylon Library chimney breast. Carll family records in possession of Elbert and Julia Livingston, descendants, of Babylon.

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Douglas map of Suffolk County; surveyed 1858. Hyde's Atlas of Long Island: 1872, in Huntington Library. Deeds and memorabilia, the Misses Caroline and Antoinette Sammis, Babylon.

Additional Data

Front (east) section of present structure built by Nathaniel Conklin, perhaps on speculation, but more probably to the order of T. Platt Carll who occupied it as home and store.

"Babylon Reminiscences," 1911, pp.33-35, "The Platt Carll family, once numerous and prominent ---. T.P.Carll who for many years kept a store in the west end of the house ---.

It was a comfortable mansion ---."

In 1871, David S. Sammis purchased the house from T. Platt Carll's widow and in 1873, it appears, sold it to John Lux. Lux moved it north several hundred rods to the (present) location near the then-new railroad depot; joined it to an earlier structure, which became the rear ell, and opened for business as the 'Washington Boarding House' under which name it is still operated.

From the present appearance of the front, it is doubtful that the house originally had a porch. Certainly it had none on the present north side, and both present porches date from the moving operation. The matched pine boarding on the front under-porch wall, however, indicates a porch here originally.

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The weather sheathing of this 1803 house is of hand-split and dressed shingles (except under the porch). These are butt-nailed with cut nails set and puttied.

The full-length, under-porch windows are probably of the later period. Custom as well as difference in trim detail from other first floor windows point to this conclusion.

The chimney exposures are weak in form. Appearances in the attic and throughout the house, rafter openings, lack of fire-places under some mantels, and an un-whitewashed south attic wall section indicate that both chimneys were re-set at time of the re-location. (The attic is whitewashed).

House-moving custom confirms this.

The cornice is of special note, stopping short of the house ends, and with the dentil course closed at the bottom. The gentle roof splay which is lacking in the rear is also of pleasing line.

On the south side, two lower 'six-over six' sash have replaced the earlier 'eight over eight' which appear elsewhere in the house.

In the west elevation the odd two-over-two window (at the stair landing) is interesting. Its almost door-size and position over the main floor indicates that these openings might have given access to a two-story ell or porch at some time.

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However, there is no other apparent structural or historical data to warrant this supposition.

The original lock is missing from the 'Dutch' type front door. The door has four wide strap hinges plainly flattened and pointed at the ends. There is an odd reversal of the two top-most panels. The iron door-knock is illustrated in the early Birmingham catalogs, but this one may be an American copy. Two one-inch-square nuts and screw-ends which hold the knocker in place appear on the inside.

The hall is plain though of generous proportions. This effect is heightened by the rear location of the right-about-turn stairs. Plainly cased posts protrude into the hall about four inches on each side and the case continues across the ceiling, concealing the girt; this feature is noted upstairs also. A half-rounded chair rail continues around the lower hall, the stair run, and the upper hall. Interior doors, except in the attic and ell are both four and six-panel types, rather crudely finished and in nearly every case lacking the original hardware. It is altogether probable that some of these antedate the house. Wall areas in general throughout are not pleasing, a fault attributable to the relation of room plans to the high ceilings.

An outstanding feature worthy of note is the main central

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structural member seen in the attic. This member is on a framing with tips of vertical members mortised and tennoned into the full depth of a  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " by  $7\frac{1}{2}$ " girt. This girt is of oak, in one piece forty-five feet long, with collar braces resting thereon. It is a type quite unique and not usually seen on Long Island. Heavily braced as they are, these four posts, three girts, and a sill are literally the back-bone of the structure. Posts measure  $7\frac{1}{2}$ " x 8". All members are of hewn oak. The attic floor is of random width oak nine to sixteen inches wide. Roof members, girts, and posts are whitewashed except a section of the south wall against which the chimney formerly stood. However, whitewash does not appear above line of rafter collar beams. Shingle nailing strips are of oak, and the shingles themselves of split pine and are now in need of replacement.

The original south chimney was of much greater width apparently, for three pair of rafter heads are cut away.

Finally, there is no cellar under the front house; sills rest on about six courses of brick.

In the rear all the following is of note:

1. A hewn oak frame of raised plate type, permitting the "down-on-the belly" attic windows on the north.
2. Late main floor joists of sawn pine; over the circular cellar, walled with brick.

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3. Pine batten doors to and in the attic with old H-L, and wrought iron latch hardware and nails.

4. The interesting frieze on front now facing north.

These items seem to indicate that this was one of the many Babylon houses which have been moved, perhaps as a result of the coming of the railroad. The chimney tops are newer than the house. The chimneys themselves might be older. This part of the structure is somewhat older than the front house although the shingle courses on the north side and east end match the main house; this was a later work.

The eight or nine foot section which joins this older structure to the front house should not be overlooked. It was built to insure a boarding-house dining room of sufficient size, it would seem.

## Sources Consulted:

Misses Caroline and Antoinette Sammis; deeds and memorabilia.  
Miss Seaman (father salvaged tablet at time of removal of house).  
Miss Julia Livingston (descendant of Platt Carll).  
Carll family records in possession of Elbert and Julia Livingston, descendants, of Babylon.  
Douglas map of Suffolk County; surveyed 1858.  
Hyde's Atlas of Long Island, 1872; in Huntington Library.

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Approved

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